

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

2023-03-24

2. Department

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

4. CEA Position Title

Assistant Deputy Director, Community Wildfire Planning and Risk Reduction

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose.  
(2-3 sentences)

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) requests to revise (split) the current Chief, Planning and Risk Analysis, Fire Engineering and Investigations Career Executive Assignment (CEA) position, and establish a new CEA, Level A position. The current duties will be split between both CEA positions. The position will continue to serve as a principal policymaker responsible for managing, directing, providing leadership, and developing and implementing policy relative to local assistance of wildfire preparedness, planning, engineering, mitigation, and prevention. The position will continue to provide an executive level coordination and collaboration on the relative topics with other local governments, state agencies, associations, stakeholders, and non-profit groups. The CEA will manage a section of the Department's Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division required to carry out the Department's missions and statutory requirements.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Deputy Director / CEA B

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one*)

- ☐ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- ☒ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*): The position will serve to advise the Department's Director as part of the Department's Leadership Team.

8. Organizational Level (*Select one*)

☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☒ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

## B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

### 9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

In the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), under the direction of the Deputy Director (CEA B) for Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation, the Assistant Deputy Director (CEA A) will provide statewide administrative oversight over the Wildfire Planning and Statistics Program, and the Wildfire Risk Reduction Program. Oversee the Department's implementation of various fire prevention related programs including Defensible Space, Home Hardening, Utility Wildfire Mitigation, CAL FIRE and Fire Service Incident Reporting, Wildfire Protection Building Construction Codes, Hazard Mapping, Risk Modeling, State Responsibility Area Remapping, and Fuel Reduction Reporting.

The position will enforce the various laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; as well as implements, monitors, and evaluates policies to ensure compliance. Ensures applicable department services are delivered at a high professional standard as expected by the public and consistent with Departmental policy.

The position advises and provides support to the Deputy Director and State Fire Marshal, while providing executive level coordination and collaboration with other agencies (i.e., Natural Resources Agency, CalOES, CPUC, Energy Safety, CCC, DOC, HCD, FEMA), Multi-Agency Groups (i.e., Board of Forestry, Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, California Fire Safe Council), associations (i.e., Ca Building Officials, CalChiefs), and stakeholders (i.e., Legislature, RCRC, CSAC, CBIA, industry).

This position represents the Department on issues related to wildfire planning, wildfire mitigation, community preparedness, and fire prevention engineering. May represent the Director and State Fire Marshal on relevant program issues before the Legislature and Governor, as well as local government leaders, and other stakeholders. Testify as needed before legislative committees and hearings, as well as various state boards and commissions.

This position will develop and implement policy supportive of the Department's mission to reduce large and damaging wildfires. Initiate, prepare, and/or analyze legislative or regulatory proposals for State and program impact; assist in the preparation of legal actions; prepare and/or review technical articles for publications; prepare workload and related personnel, fiscal, management, and systems analyses; develop annual divisional goals and objectives; research and develop budget change proposals. This position will work with stakeholders, cooperators, and Contract Counties.

This position will work closely with and communicate regularly with the Department's Executive Team, providing support and direction to the Department's day-to-day activities. Interact with other Assistant Deputy Directors and Assistant Region Chiefs in developing and implementing policy and procedures. Coordinate and work closely with the Department's Legislative Staff to suggest, author and analyze legislation supportive of or impacting the Department's and OSFM's Mission.

Identify community fire prevention programs administered by state, regional, and local agencies to address the risks of wildfire and support the implementation of those programs. Identify public and private programs that may be leveraged to facilitate home hardening and community preparedness to minimize the impacts of wildfire to habitable structures. Conduct outreach efforts to regional and local wildfire mitigation groups including Firewise recognized communities and Fire Safe Councils.

Regularly responds to emergencies and wildfires of all types and sizes. Spends considerable amount of time in the field at all-hazard emergency incidents providing critical leadership, oversight, and direction. Expected to function in the capacity of an active-duty firefighter and first responder.

**B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)**

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☒ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: CAL FIRE is statutorily required to not only suppress wildfires, but also is responsible for fire prevention efforts within the State Responsibility Area. California's wildfire season has broken records for the past five years. With over 4 million acres burned, five of the six largest fires in state history burning simultaneously, and at one point, as many as 250,000 people displaced, the 2020 fire season has only highlighted the critical need for fire prevention. California has already started scaling community wildfire mitigation efforts in recent years, but 2021's one-billion-dollar budget proposed by the Governor has significantly increased the Department's pace and scale of various fire prevention efforts.

The Department's programs within communities are essential to protect California residents from all types of wildfires, including wind driven fires that spread embers ahead of the fire front. These include hardening structures against embers, establishing defensible space around homes, planning fire resistant communities, and supporting local and regional efforts to create fire-adapted communities through improvements in local ordinances, state regulations, emergency access routes, communications, and other tools.

The Department's Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division consists of multiple activities including wildland pre-fire engineering, vegetation management, fire planning, education and enforcement. Typical fire prevention projects include brush clearance, prescribed fire, defensible space inspections, emergency evacuation planning, fire prevention education, fire hazard severity mapping, and fire-related law enforcement activities.

## **B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)**

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

In September 2021, an interconnected package of legislation was enacted to enhance California's ability to prevent wildfires, reduce the severity of wildfires, and prepare wildfire- threatened communities to increase the protection of people, structures, and communities (Chapters 225, 375, and 382, Statutes of 2021 (AB 9, AB 642, and SB 63)). Along with these new statutory requirements, the legislature appropriated an additional CEA A to manage the additional workload and staff.

Assembly Bill 9 (Wood, Chapter 225, Statutes of 2021) added Public Resource Code sections 4209 and 4209.1 to, among other things, establish the community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division within the OSFM, that is now responsible for administering specified new and existing fire preparedness and mitigation programs. The OSFM is now tasked with increasing the state's focus on community wildfires preparedness and mitigation by realigning a suite of various fire prevention programs, as well as creating several new programs.

California continues to experience some of the most destructive wildfire seasons in state history, with millions of acres burning, tens of thousands of structures being destroyed, and countless lives lost. Since the beginning of 2015, California has experienced 12 out of the 20 largest wildfires in the state's history, and 15 out of the 20 most destructive fires. The reality of a changing climate, persistent drought, warmer temperatures, and more severe weather events has created conditions that are leading to more frequent and destructive wildfires.

CAL FIRE has long been charged with preventing wildfires within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), and recent wildfires have only highlighted the need for enhanced focus on community preparedness and wildfire prevention. Public Resources Code section 714 requires CAL FIRE to, among other things, provide fire prevention services, and maintain an integrated staff to implement these activities. These activities include fire plan development and implementation, fuel reduction, land use planning, wildland building codes, home hardening, defensible space, utility wildfire mitigation, fire hazard mapping, public education, incident data collection, and post-fire inspection data.

In January 2021, the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) released a comprehensive action plan to reduce wildfire risk for vulnerable communities, improve the health of forests and wildlands, and accelerate action to combat climate change. In it, the Task Force stated that California's diverse landscapes and communities require regionally tailored strategies and actions for protecting communities and resources from wildfire.

### C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The proposed CEA will be a member of the Department's Leadership Team, the incumbent will regularly provide significant advice and recommendations to the Director and State Fire Marshal on policy issues relative to the wildfire planning, community hardening, and fire prevention. The position would be responsible to establish, update, and maintain statewide policies and procedures. Policy and procedures developed by this position will assist in ensuring that CAL FIRE programs and staff implement the various fire prevention programs that aim at reducing the threat, severity, and damage from wildfires.

**Utility Wildfire Mitigation** – In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of large and damaging wildfires caused by utility owned power lines and electrical infrastructure. CAL FIRE's Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program was created as a result of State legislation focused on power line utility caused fires (reference Senate Bill 1028 and 901). CAL FIRE subject matters experts and other agencies conduct comprehensive reviews of the Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans annually, as well as enforce California Public Resource Code 4292 and 4293 requiring vegetation clearance around electrical infrastructure. (CAL FIRE Policy 9230).

**Structure Hardening** – The department is responsible for adopting building codes for construction in wildfires areas. These codes only apply to new construction; Most of the state's housing stock was built before the codes were established and are, therefore, in need of retrofitting. Simple retrofits improve a home's survival in the face of a wildfire. These efforts can significantly increase a home's chance of surviving a wildfire. Chapter 391, Statutes of 2019 (Assembly Bill 38) created a wildfire mitigation assistance pilot program to provide financial assistance to low- and moderate-income homeowners in wildfire prone areas of the state that could not otherwise afford retrofitting projects.

**Defensible Space** - The CEA would be responsible to enforce the statutory requirement that homeowners maintain 100-feet of clearance of dead/dying vegetation from around their homes, as referenced in California Public Resource Code 4291. (CAL FIRE Policy 9044). This issue has statewide impact as the legal requirement extends to all homeowners within the State Responsibility Area, which CAL FIRE is charged with protecting, but is also applicable in parts of the Local Responsibility Area (Government Code 51182). This impact is growing significantly following recent legislation (Assembly Bill 3074), which establishes an ember-resistant zone within the first 5-feet around a home. The new zone is likely going to garner a lot of attention as the general public may struggle with implementation.

**Wildfire Protection Building Construction Codes** - Buildings are required to be constructed so that they have less chance of catching fire from burning embers from wildfires. By constructing buildings in a way that reduces the ability of embers to intrude, a major cause of structure ignition is reduced. (Government Code 13108.5). The CEA provides direction to the Office's advisory group that drafts the updated code regulation (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Chapter 7A). The position will also provide support to the staff that develop a listing of these building materials as directed in Health and Safety Code 13159.5.

### **C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)**

#### **13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?**

The proposed Assistant Deputy Director (CEA A) will advise and provide support to the Director, State Fire Marshal, and the Department's Executive Management Team in ensuring the department meets its statutory and regulatory requirements of preventing wildfires and preparing communities and homeowners against wildfires. This CEA will represent CAL FIRE regarding all issues related to community wildfire prevention and risk reduction with the Department of Finance, California Public Utilities Commission, Natural Resources Agency, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California Wildfire and Forest Resiliency Task Force, and various other agencies, other public and private organizations, and federal agencies.

This position will function with a high degree of independence, working directly with Deputy Directors, Assistant Deputy Directors, Region Chiefs, and Assistant Region Chiefs on the implementation of the various wildfire prevention and community preparedness programs and services.

As the Departmental expert on community wildfire prevention, this position takes the initiative in recommending policy directives to ensure that State's statutes and regulations are implemented and followed.

The proposed position will provide annual reports of accomplishments, as well as statistical information on the department's fire prevention metrics to the State's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, Legislature and other governing bodies and organizations.

#### **14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?**

Yes, the proposed CEA A, Assistant Deputy Director, will provide oversight into the development of new policies, as well as updating outdated department policies and procedures related to fire prevention. Most of the department's fire prevention policies were written in the 1990s and are outdated, inconsistent, and incomplete. This position will be tasked with bringing these policies to date and incorporate new statewide program areas, as well as new state laws and mandates. This position will provide advice to the Director, State Fire Marshal, and Executive Team in the development, interpretation, and administration of the various wildfire prevention policies.